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Official Languages

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RAISING OUR GAME

FOR VANCOUVER 2010

**Final Report on the Vancouver 2010 Olympic
and Paralympic Winter Games**

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INTRODUCTION – FINDINGS

In early 2010, Canada welcomed the world to Vancouver and Whistler, British Columbia, for the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, which took place from February 12 to 28, 2010, and March 12 to 21, 2010, respectively. During the planning and the staging of these Games, Canada had the opportunity to show its citizens, visitors and television viewers around the world the values that inspire and define its identity, and demonstrate the degree to which linguistic duality is a fundamental value of Canadian society.

The Commissioner of Official Languages felt that it was extremely important to reflect Canadian linguistic duality in all components and activities of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, even though they were being held in a largely English-speaking province. Therefore, before the Games, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages undertook sustained proactive as well as preventive interventions. In December 2008, more than a year before the Games, the Office of the Commissioner published a study entitled *Raising our Game for Vancouver 2010: Towards a Canadian Model of Linguistic Duality in International Sport*.¹ In early 2009, it conducted an awareness campaign aimed at a number of federal institutions that were to play a role in the event. In September 2009, five months before the Games, a follow-up report to the study was published.² In February 2010, the Commissioner attended the Olympic Games to experience first-hand the atmosphere of the Games, to see how they were conducted, and to participate in events organized by British Columbia's French-speaking community. In addition, the Commissioner's staff continued to perform their monitoring role during the Games.

The prominence of the French language during the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games was significant on an international level. In July 2009, the International Organisation of La Francophonie (IOF) named Pascal Couchepin as Grand Témoin de la Francophonie for the Games. In this way, the IOF continued its work observing, strengthening and raising awareness of the use of French at the Olympic Games, work that had begun at the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens. English and French are the official languages of the Olympic Movement, but the use of French has seen a significant decline over the course of the most recent Games. Mr. Couchepin was mandated to observe the use of French during the Games, and in June 2010, he submitted his report, which is available in French only, but has a summary in English.³

The Commissioner of Official Languages had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Couchepin three times before the Games. They share a common desire: that the legacy of the Vancouver Games be passed on to the next Olympic and Paralympic Games and that it serve the International Olympic Committee in its work and relationships with future organizing committees and partners. French is an international language and, just like major sporting events, it has the power to bring people together in the name of respect and pluralism. It is therefore important that the French language be accorded its rightful place at major sporting events both in Canada and around the world.

1 Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, *Raising our Game for Vancouver 2010: Towards a Canadian Model of Linguistic Duality in International Sport* (Ottawa: Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2008). Also available online at www.ocol-clo.gc.ca/docs/e/vanoc_covan_e.pdf.

2 Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, *Raising our Game for Vancouver 2010: Towards a Canadian Model of Linguistic Duality in International Sport – A Follow-up* (Ottawa: Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2009). Also available online at www.ocol-clo.gc.ca/docs/e/vanoc_covan_2009_e.pdf.

3 Pascal Couchepin, *Rapport à S.E.M. Abdou Diouf, Secrétaire général de la Francophonie, sur la promotion de la langue française et de la Francophonie dans les Jeux olympiques et paralympiques de 2010 à Vancouver* (Paris: International Organisation of La Francophonie, 2010), pp. 73–78. Also available online at www.francophonie.org/IMG/pdf/OIF_RapportCouchepin.pdf.

Grand Témoin de la Francophonie Report

The report on the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games by the Grand Témoin de la Francophonie, Pascal Couchepin, was published in the summer of 2010. The report includes recommendations for the International Organisation of La Francophonie, Olympic family and future organizing committees. In accordance with the Grand Témoin's mandate, the report describes the Games from two main angles:

- the prominence given to the French language under the protocol requirements of the Olympic Movement, and
- the relationships developed by the Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games (VANOC) with British Columbia's Francophone community, with Canada's French-speaking population and with the rest of the French-speaking world.

As the report states, the Grand Témoin's role was not to ensure that Canada respected the language requirements of the *Official Languages Act*.

The Grand Témoin and VANOC signed a multilateral agreement for the promotion of the French language at the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. In the agreement, both parties committed to promoting all the provisions of Annex A of the 2002 Multiparty Agreement and to developing a guide on best language practices, which is currently in production. The guide will provide a variety of practical tools and useful advice for the International Olympic Committee and for the organizing committees of future Olympic Games.

Preparatory phase plagued by problems

Generally speaking, the French language enjoyed good visibility during the Olympic and Paralympic Games; however, the Games also had failures that overshadowed its successes. Before addressing this aspect, it is important to examine the numerous difficulties related to the use of French that marked the preparatory phase of the Games.

The Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games (VANOC), Canadian Heritage (in particular, the Department's 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Federal Secretariat), the cities of Vancouver and Whistler, Public Works and Government Services Canada's Translation Bureau, and a number of other federal institutions all made significant efforts to fulfill the commitment to present bilingual Games.

Nevertheless, to ensure that the requirements would be met and that Canadian linguistic duality would be properly reflected, interventions and close monitoring was required from a number of parties, including the Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique, the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne, the Canadian Foundation for Cross-Cultural Dialogue, Canadian Heritage, the Office of the Commissioner of

Official Languages, members of the parliamentary standing committees on official languages, and senior public servants of the Government of Canada. Moreover, Canadian Heritage and the Prime Minister's personal representative for official languages, who was also a member of VANOC's Board of Directors, organized activities to raise awareness and ensure follow-up among federal institutions in the fall of 2009. The parliamentary standing committees, particularly the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages, also discussed the Games in the fall of 2009 as part of their deliberations.

Most of the difficulties encountered were due to VANOC officials having insufficient knowledge or a misunderstanding of the official languages requirements, to which they were bound by the Multiparty Agreement, and of the need for the Olympic and Paralympic Games to properly reflect the presence and contribution of both English- and French-speaking Canadians. This meant that official languages were not always given priority. It seems that Canadian Heritage and VANOC had different interpretations of the language requirements, and these differences became increasingly clear in the months leading up to the Games. This highlighted the need for federal institutions to ensure that the organizers shared a common understanding and interpretation of the requirements. Canadian Heritage

monitored the official languages situation within VANOC more closely in order to target potential problems and identify challenges that required federal government intervention during the six to eight months prior to the Games.

Because translation and interpretation resources had not been adequately evaluated, a lot of energy was expended to rectify the situation in the few months before the Games. VANOC's financial difficulties in the summer of 2009 led to a reassessment of certain expenses related to official languages requirements, such as the translation of manuals and athletes' biographies. VANOC officials were, however, committed to respecting—and even surpassing—all the requirements set forth in the Multiparty Agreement.

Broadcasting the Games on television in English and French across the country was a crucial issue. The consortium formed by CTVglobemedia and Rogers, with the participation of RDS, RIS and V, did not allow all French-speaking Canadians to watch the Games in their language. Long, sometimes arduous negotiations resolved the situation just before the start of the Games, thanks to the intervention of the Cable Public Affairs Channel and the collaboration of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission.

Games' success stories eclipsed by failures

The Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games were a great success from the point of view of their organization and the performance of Canada's athletes, who roused Canadians' sense of unity. Furthermore, the fact that many English- and French-speaking athletes were bilingual and proud to be able to express themselves in their second language is an encouraging sign of progress for linguistic duality.

One of the greatest successes of the Games was VANOC's communications with the public (e.g., its Web site was in both official languages). Bilingual signage of VANOC, Vancouver and Whistler, as well as of many sponsors, was a tangible expression of Canada's linguistic duality in the Games' host cities. In almost all the competitions, announcements and commentaries were in both official languages, highlighting Canada's bilingualism for both the spectators on site and for television viewers around the world. The volunteers also contributed to the success of the Games through their enthusiasm, their friendly welcome and their provision of services in both official languages. The French language was given the proper prominence at the closing ceremony of the Olympic Games and at the opening and closing ceremonies of the Paralympic Games.

The cultural performances also helped to highlight the richness and diversity of the English and French components of the Canadian identity. The Place de la Francophonie, a Francophone cultural showcase organized in parallel with the Olympic Games and located in the centre of Vancouver on Granville Island, focused attention on the vitality and diversity of Francophone culture in British Columbia, Canada and abroad.

Unfortunately, there were failures that sometimes overshadowed the Games' shining moments. For example, the French language was not prominent enough in the countdown ceremony that took place in Vancouver in February 2009, nor at many of the stops on the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Torch Relay; there were not enough bilingual volunteers at some venues; some unilingual volunteers did not seek help from a bilingual colleague; and it was very hard to find a printed French version of the Vancouver 2010 Official Souvenir Program on site, while the English version was widely available.

However, the element that undoubtedly eclipsed the Games' successes was the opening ceremony, in which there was an obvious disparity between the representations of English and French in the cultural component of the event. This ceremony was seen by hundreds of millions of people across the globe and constituted an unparalleled chance to present Canada to the world. VANOC missed a golden opportunity to show that linguistic duality is an intrinsic part of the Canadian identity.

Of the 46 admissible complaints submitted to the Office of the Commissioner during the Olympic Games, most (38) were about the opening ceremony. The rest of the complaints concerned other aspects relating to the obligations of Canadian Heritage, through VANOC, except for one regarding the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority. Three complaints were submitted during the Paralympic Games.

Key institutions that provided services during the Games

The Commissioner felt that it was extremely important for the various federal institutions providing services during the Olympic and Paralympic Games to ensure that linguistic duality was reflected as a brand image of Canadian identity, given that a large number of visitors from Canada and abroad would be in contact with these institutions.

The Commissioner asked 11 federal institutions to provide him with reports on their performance, including the challenges they faced and the lessons they learned during the event, which they did. Most of the institutions felt

that they had risen to the challenge of providing visitors with services in both official languages and that they had integrated these services into their planning for the 2010 Games. However, in certain cases, this integration seemed to have been done after the Office of the Commissioner's awareness campaign and the interventions of other key parties, particularly the parliamentary standing committees. The performance evaluations seemed to indicate that a number of institutions adequately monitored the availability of their services in both official languages. In addition, some institutions, such as the Vancouver Airport Authority and the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, were able to target areas that will need improvement. The responses of these organizations show that they are aware of the difficulties they encountered and will hopefully take corrective measures that will prove effective in the future. In summary, only certain institutions felt that it was necessary to monitor the availability of services in both official languages in order to ensure that visitors were always offered service in the official language of their choice. These institutions recognize the importance of having accountability mechanisms to measure public satisfaction.

Overall, federal institutions recognized that they needed to increase their bilingual capacity for major events like the Olympic Games. Canada Post, Service Canada and the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority showed that they could, when necessary, go beyond the *Official Languages (Communications with and Services to the Public) Regulations* by offering services in both official languages at offices that were not designated bilingual.

Preparations for the Games were marked by a number of failures and weaknesses, which required sustained interventions from a number of individuals and groups. In general, however, linguistic duality was reflected during the Games and contributed to Canada's prestige abroad.

1. METHODOLOGY

The information and analyses in this report come from a variety of sources. As mentioned in the introduction, two publications precede this third and final report by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages on the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. The first two publications provided the basis for this final report.

A large quantity of documents relating to official languages at the Olympic and Paralympic Games were also analyzed, including transcripts of the proceedings at which VANOC and federal institutions appeared before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages and the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages in anticipation of the Games. Other documents consulted include the September 2009 Standing Senate Committee follow-up report on the subject,⁴ news articles and the response that Canadian Heritage sent to the Office of the Commissioner after the Games.

Important information was gathered from the responses of the 11 federal institutions, including Canadian Heritage, that provided reports to the Commissioner of Official Languages in the summer of 2010. In his September 2009 follow-up report, the Commissioner made a series of recommendations to VANOC, Canadian Heritage and other federal institutions providing services during the Games. He recommended that they report to him by November 30, 2009, on various measures related to their state of readiness for the Games. This information was compiled and sent to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages and the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages. The Commissioner also recommended (Recommendation 11) that all institutions identified in the follow-up report, including Canadian Heritage, inform him of their own assessment of their official languages performance during the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, including positive experiences and lessons learned. It should be noted that a response was received from all the institutions that received a letter from the Commissioner.

⁴ Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages, *Reflecting Canada's Linguistic Duality at the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games: A Golden Opportunity – Follow-up Report* (Ottawa: Senate Committees Directorate, 2009). Also available online at <http://www.parl.gc.ca/40/2/parlbus/commbus/senate/com-e/official/rep-e/rep04sep09-e.pdf>.

The Office of the Commissioner also interviewed several representatives of VANOC, Canadian Heritage, the Translation Bureau, the Canadian Foundation for Cross-Cultural Dialogue and VANOC's Advisory Panel on Official Languages. In addition, three employees of the Office of the Commissioner went to Vancouver during the Games and experienced the Games as members of the public to provide additional input into the analysis. It is important to note that while their experience was similar to that of a visitor requiring services in French, this was not a systematic audit.

Two parts of the *Official Languages Act* were used to analyze results provided by the 11 federal institutions that reported back to the Commissioner: Part IV on service to the public (especially section 25, which covers services provided by third parties on behalf of federal institutions) and Part VII on the advancement of English and French.

Most of the observations in this report apply to both the Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games, given that the two events were organized by the same committee and had the same partners. However, the majority of the examples are taken from the Olympic Games because of their greater size and popularity.

Parts IV and VII of the Official Languages Act

The aim of Part IV of the *Official Languages Act* is to ensure that Government of Canada institutions are able to provide services to the public in the official language of their choice. These services must be of equal quality, regardless of the official language chosen by the person requesting the service. The *Official Languages (Communications with and Services to the Public) Regulations* indicate which offices must offer services in both official languages.

To ensure that the public feels comfortable using the official language of their choice, federal institutions must actively offer services in both English and French, whether in spoken interactions (for example, by using the phrase, "Hello, bonjour") or by using bilingual signage.

Part IV of the Act also stipulates, in section 25, that every federal institution must ensure that services provided by a third party on its behalf are provided in both official languages in cases where the institution would be obligated to do the same.

Federal institutions also have obligations under Part VII of the Act, which sets forth the federal government's commitment to enhance the vitality and support the development of official language minority communities, and to foster the full recognition and use of both English and French in Canadian society. It also stipulates that all federal institutions have a duty to take positive measures to fulfill this commitment.

2. THE MULTIPARTY AGREEMENT

Context

This section analyzes whether the implementation of Annex A of the Multiparty Agreement and the language clauses in the contribution agreements posed problems, and whether these clauses were clear and comprehensive. It also assesses the degree to which VANOC officials understood the official languages requirements.

Under Rule 24 of the *Olympic Charter*, English and French are the official languages of the International Olympic Committee, whose headquarters are in Lausanne, Switzerland. In the case of divergence between the English and French texts, the French text shall prevail unless expressly provided otherwise in writing. Olympic Games host cities and countries must respect both languages of the Olympic Movement in Games-related activities.

Given that Canada's official languages are English and French and that the Government of Canada made a significant financial contribution to the Games, the federal government had to ensure that VANOC complied with the

provisions of the *Official Languages Act*.

To do this, Government of Canada representatives required that official languages provisions be included in Annex A of the Multiparty Agreement signed in November 2002 between the Government of Canada, the Government of British Columbia, the City of Vancouver, the Resort Municipality of Whistler, the Canadian Olympic Committee, the Canadian Paralympic Committee and VANOC.

Annex A of the Multiparty Agreement detailed VANOC's commitments with regard to offering the general public its numerous services in both official languages. It also established the necessity of offering services in English and French to athletes, trainers, officials and members of the delegations. In order to meet these requirements, VANOC had to ensure that there was sufficient bilingual capacity among its staff and volunteers.

VANOC was not a federal institution subject to the *Official Languages Act* within the meaning of section 3 of the Act, but the Multiparty Agreement between the Games' partners, and the contribution agreements signed by VANOC and the Minister of Canadian Heritage, on behalf of the Government of Canada, meant that VANOC had specific language obligations. Because it was responsible for federal coordination with respect to the Games, Canadian Heritage, which is subject to the *Official Languages Act*, was responsible for ensuring that VANOC fulfilled the language requirements of Annex A.

Although the only official language of the Paralympic Movement is English, the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Winter Games had the same language obligations as the Olympic Winter Games because both Games involved a significant logistical and financial contribution from the Government of Canada and both Games were organized by VANOC. Interestingly, the Vancouver Olympic and Paralympic Games were the first Winter Games to be staged jointly in their entirety, as prescribed by the agreement between the International Olympic Committee and the International Paralympic Committee. Therefore, the 2010 Paralympic Winter Games were the first fully bilingual Paralympic Games in English and French.

Because Canadian Heritage contributed financially to the opening and closing ceremonies, the Olympic Torch Relay, the Cultural Olympiad, the Vancouver and Whistler celebration sites, the Place de la Francophonie and the digital album project (CODE), it included language clauses in all of its contribution agreements.

Observations

By requesting and ensuring that language requirements were incorporated into the Multiparty Agreement and that language clauses were included in the contribution agreements for a number of activities, the Government of Canada took an innovative step, as this was the first time in the history of the Olympic Games that a government had successfully achieved this. It showed that linguistic duality is an intrinsic value of Canadian society that needs to be reflected in a major international event. As long as the requirements were respected, the Games could significantly contribute to presenting the world with a bilingual image of Canada.

The provisions of Annex A covered the vast majority of the elements involved in the organization of the Olympic and Paralympic Games: signage, Web site, official programs, communications with the public and the media, tickets, recruitment of volunteers, services for athletes and officials, the opening and closing ceremonies, and the cultural activities organized before and during the Games.

As indicated by the Office of the Commissioner in its December 2008 preliminary report and September 2009 follow-up report, the absence of clauses dealing with certain important elements or the lack of precision in certain clauses in the Agreement led to conflicting interpretations of the spirit of the *Official Languages Act*. For example, there was no requirement regarding the promotional activities of many of the sponsors.

VANOC could not impose language requirements on international sponsors, as agreements with them were the responsibility of the International Olympic Committee. However, according to the observations of the Office of the Commissioner's staff, a number of international sponsors, such as Coca-Cola, Samsung, Panasonic and McDonald's, produced English and French signage, thereby helping to create a bilingual ambience in downtown Vancouver.

The national sponsors, who reported to VANOC, produced signage that was almost exclusively in English. Based on the experience of the Office of the Commissioner's staff who were on site, only the Hudson's Bay Company and the Royal Bank of Canada had signage in English and French. In the absence of language requirements, VANOC and Canadian Heritage should have been more active in raising awareness among the national sponsors of how important it was that their communications with the public be representative of the two official language communities.

According to the Office of the Commissioner, the provision in Annex A relating to third parties was too weak—it stated that the organizing committee “shall, to the extent reasonably possible, ensure the service provider maintains [the] level of standard”⁵ that would otherwise have been provided by the organizing committee. This vague wording fails to explain that the organizing committee, which is subject to language obligations, must ensure that the third party acting on its behalf also meets these obligations just as strictly. Future agreements need to make third-party obligations much clearer.

5 *Multiparty Agreement for the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games*, November 14, 2002, p. 24.
Also available online at http://www.vancouver2010.com/dl/00/08/81/mpa-en_10d-zQ.pdf.

Certainly the most problematic part of Annex A was clause 1.k) on the opening and closing ceremonies. As explained in section 4, the prominence of the French language in the cultural component of the opening ceremony was insufficient. Clause 1.k) stated that the opening and closing ceremonies “will be in both official languages and the national anthem will be sung in its bilingual version; the program will include participants and events which represent both official language groups.”⁶ Despite the fact that Annex A was repeated in its entirety in the contribution agreements with Canadian Heritage, in particular in the agreement for the opening ceremony, and that the performance indicators were included, this agreement did not ensure adequate representation of Canada’s two official language communities and thus the country’s linguistic duality was not properly reflected.

Practical difficulties arose with a number of other elements. In the spring of 2009, VANOC had produced the prototypes for the signage, but the format was not the same for the two languages: the English was in bold lettering while the French was in a light typeface. Following the intervention of the Commissioner of Official Languages in July 2009, VANOC changed the format to ensure that the English and French were given equal prominence. Also in the spring of 2009, during a number of discussions with VANOC representatives, Canadian Heritage had pointed out that their initial way of presenting the two languages did not meet the requirements of the Multiparty Agreement.

A person directly involved in organizing the Games and who was interviewed for this report also found that some of the provisions were unclear. For example, clause 1.b) stated that VANOC was to hire a languages services coordinator for a reasonable period prior to the Games. What does a “reasonable period prior to the Games” mean? Clause 1.c) stipulated with regard to bilingualism that there should be “sufficient capacity . . . among its employees and volunteers.” Once again, the clause could have been clearer. This person suggested that the clause should have specified the proportion of the staff and volunteers who should be bilingual.

Canadian Heritage included the language clauses from Annex A in the contribution agreements for the activities to which it contributed financially—the opening and closing ceremonies, the Olympic Torch Relay, the Cultural Olympiad, the Vancouver and Whistler celebration sites, the Place de la Francophonie and the digital album project (CODE). Ignoring for a moment the agreement regarding

the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games, which is dealt with in section 4, the language clauses of the contribution agreements are generally clearer and more comprehensive. This is particularly the case for the agreements relating to the celebration sites. The agreement relating to the Cultural Olympiad, although fairly complete, did not state that the obligation to present participants and activities representing the two official languages groups applied to both the spoken and visual components of the presentation.

Understanding of the requirements in Annex A

In addition to the written requirements, another important aspect of the Games’ success from a language point of view was senior management’s understanding of and commitment to implementing these requirements. VANOC officials simply did not fully understand the scope of the requirements. Most of the people interviewed indicated that their general understanding improved as they went on. However, faced with a tighter financial situation, VANOC officials sought to reduce expenses, including those related to official languages. They considered disregarding some of the provisions of Annex A: for example, by not translating the athletes’ biographies.

It is clear that some officials misunderstood the prominence that had to be given to the French language in the cultural component and thought that it could be represented solely by visual and protocol elements. Full linguistic duality, as an integral part of the Canadian identity, requires clear visibility of the two languages and the two official language communities in all aspects of a cultural event.

Lessons learned

Canadian Heritage, acting on behalf of the Government of Canada, clearly showed its commitment to linguistic duality by incorporating official languages requirements into the Multiparty Agreement as well as the contribution agreements. In addition to strengthening the position of French in the Olympic Movement, this commitment resulted in the first fully bilingual Paralympic Games in English and French.

The limited understanding of the Agreement and the lack of clarity in certain areas caused problems, and improvements will need to be made to any future agreements.

Although they had little experience with and knowledge of official languages at the beginning of their mandate, overall, VANOC officials were generally open-minded, which

⁶ Ibid.

enabled them to commit to meeting the planned language requirements. However, they did have trouble understanding the scope of these requirements in certain cases. Discussions with Canadian Heritage, the parliamentary standing committees on official languages and the Commissioner of Official Languages helped to clarify expectations, which was reflected in all of the various components of the event, with the notable and unfortunate exception of the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games.

While recognizing the considerable efforts by VANOC officials to apply the provisions of Annex A, certain interviewees and representatives of French-speaking community organizations indicated that it would have been easier and more instinctive to show Canada's Francophone character in all components of the Games if more VANOC officials had been fluent in both official languages. Others suggested that organizers of future major events who have a limited understanding of the meaning of linguistic duality should spend some time among the other official language community. In the opinion of the Office of the Commissioner, a good understanding of linguistic duality is one of the leadership qualities for executives of major events.

Future outlook

Incorporating language requirements into the agreements between Olympic Games partners and language clauses into the contribution agreements could be used as a model for other organizing committees for national or international sporting events.

The provisions of the agreements that cover third parties should clearly reflect the fact that the organizing committee, having language obligations, must ensure that third parties acting on its behalf also meet these same obligations. It is important to establish regular accountability mechanisms.

Canadian Heritage and central agencies such as the Treasury Board Secretariat need to monitor and supervise the organizing committee closely to ensure that its executives fully understand the scope of linguistic duality. To help members of the organizing committee understand the meaning of linguistic duality, it would be useful if the language requirements had a preamble on official languages that described the principles and objectives of this core Canadian value. Awareness-raising sessions on Canada's linguistic duality, including the situation of official language communities, would also help improve understanding. Moreover, an optimal number of people who are fluent in both French and English should be chosen to fill a certain number of positions at key levels.

3. ACCOUNTABILITY

Context

In an organization as big as VANOC, funded in part by the Government of Canada, efficient internal and external accountability mechanisms are essential for achieving official languages objectives.

The effectiveness of these mechanisms is all the more important when many players are involved, such as the International Olympic Committee and the International Paralympic Committee, the Government of Canada through Canadian Heritage, the Government of British Columbia, the host cities, French-speaking community organizations, partners and sponsors.

Observations

Starting in 2007, Canadian Heritage began receiving quarterly progress reports from VANOC on the official languages situation. These reports were mostly descriptive at the beginning, consisting of a list of activities that had been completed, but over time they improved, tying in more closely with the requirements of Annex A. Added to this were performance indicators and challenges to overcome, all of which helped the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Federal Secretariat to keep up to date with issues to be discussed with VANOC or within the Department.

The accountability mechanism for VANOC's Executive Committee and Board of Directors also improved over time. While official languages issues were not regularly on meeting agendas at first, by 2009 they were an established point of discussion. This practice should have been in place from the start.

Following a recommendation from the Commissioner in his December 2008 report, the Advisory Committee on Official Languages was created by VANOC's Board of Directors at the end of the year. Its objective was to examine strategic official languages issues and to report to VANOC's Board of Directors and Executive Committee. The Advisory Committee began slowly, but then met five or six times. According to those involved that the Office of the Commissioner met with, the Committee played a key role when the time came to support VANOC and offer guidance in dealing with important issues, thanks to the credibility and authority of its members. The Advisory Committee examined issues such as the following: the bilingual capacity of the volunteers, signage, the Place de la Francophonie and the opening and closing ceremonies.

Within VANOC, the responsibility for implementing the requirements of the Multiparty Agreement fell to the senior managers of the various sectors. They were supported by VANOC's Official Languages Function, a team of three people whose director reported to the Senior Vice-President, Human Resources, Sustainability and International Client Services. At the start, this director was also responsible for human resources. Many people who were interviewed before and after the Games mentioned the commitment, drive and determination of the members of this team, particularly the director. The Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique praised the team's work on the relationships established between VANOC and British Columbia's Francophone community.

Most of the interviewees indicated that the Official Languages Function did not have sufficient authority to exercise enough influence over the senior managers in the various sectors, a problem exacerbated by the fact that several of these managers needed a higher level of support in order to properly understand the official languages requirements. The Official Languages Function should also have been established from the start and should have had more resources. Some interviewees indicated to the Office of the Commissioner that the responsibility for translation, which was transferred from communications to the official languages team in 2009, should have been under the Official Languages Function from the start in order to better plan the translation needs and necessary resources.

At Canadian Heritage, there was no formal monitoring report mechanism. The Games Federal Secretariat, which included two full-time employees working on language issues, regularly discussed official languages with VANOC. Official languages were on the meeting agendas of the various committees under the Framework of Federal Coordination. Official languages also remained a permanent discussion point on the agenda of all meetings of the Executive Committee, chaired by the Deputy Minister of Canadian Heritage. The representatives of the Games Federal Secretariat and several other branches of Canadian Heritage devoted a lot of time and energy to the Games' language issues.

Canadian Heritage's approach was to guide and support VANOC officials, believing this to be a more effective way of convincing them. Representatives of French-speaking communities and other interviewees would have liked Canadian Heritage to take a stricter and more proactive approach, given that it was the representative of the Government of Canada and, as such, should have ensured

that the value and image of linguistic duality would be fully reflected in all Games-related activities. The size of the Government of Canada's financial contribution was another argument for being more exacting. The interviewees highlighted the fact that several issues that were slow to be resolved (e.g., signage, translation and the bilingual capacity of volunteers) would doubtless have been resolved more quickly with a firmer approach. Some people indicated that Canadian Heritage should have done better in embracing its role of promoting Canadian culture, a key element of which is the fact that two languages are spoken throughout the country—English and French.

A number of those interviewed emphasized that, for a major event like this in the future, a detailed plan or a set of specifications for official languages should be established from the outset, should include estimates of the necessary resources, and should be incorporated into the business plan. Without specifying any particular means, the Office of the Commissioner feels that the most important thing is to have a planning process that takes official languages into consideration from the outset and monitors the issue throughout implementation.

Lessons learned

Despite a genuine willingness among most of the VANOC officials, the integration of official languages was not a natural reflex, which meant that a number of issues were not resolved until late in the process. The officials had not grasped the extent of the language requirements and had not allocated sufficient resources to them.

Furthermore, the way Canadian Heritage or another mandated federal organization monitors an organizing committee should be rethought. The manner in which the federal government monitored VANOC's implementation of Annex A was inadequate until the summer of 2009 because the Games Federal Secretariat, reporting to Canadian Heritage, was not proactive enough when dealing with VANOC and contented itself with pointing out the problems it observed. This created a significant backlog that had to be caught up during the months preceding the Games.

Some interviewees said that the Advisory Committee on Official Languages could have played a more decisive role if it had been established earlier. In their opinion and in that of the Office of the Commissioner, it could have guided VANOC and helped it to deal with certain issues more swiftly, which would have avoided the need to catch up and avoided the debates in the last few months leading up to the Games.

Establishing the VANOC Official Languages Function contributed to the Games' success. However, its effectiveness was hampered by its limited authority and insufficient resources. The Function was established late and should have dealt with the translation issue right from the start.

Future outlook

VANOC and the Government of Canada took innovative steps in creating the Advisory Committee on Official Languages and the Official Languages Function. The Office of the Commissioner feels that these two organizational mechanisms could be used again for national or international events to which the Government of Canada contributes financially. These mechanisms should be established at the beginning of the event's planning stage and include representatives from official language communities. Representatives of national and local French-speaking organizations—or English-speaking organizations, if the event is taking place in Quebec—should be encouraged to participate in order to benefit from a variety of perspectives.

When the Government of Canada makes a significant financial contribution to a major event that spotlights Canada's image, the organizing committee must include official languages in its planning from the start, and the government must continuously monitor the way in which the committee reflects linguistic duality in the preparatory activities for the event and during the event itself.

Major national or international events are golden opportunities to showcase Canada's linguistic duality, which is at the heart of the Canadian identity. The Government of Canada must closely monitor all activities to ensure that this image is reflected in all aspects of the event.

4. CEREMONIES AND CULTURAL PROGRAMMING

Context

The Olympic and Paralympic Games are primarily a coming-together of athletes who participate in competition to realize their full potential. They are also a wonderful opportunity to show the host city, the country and the rest of the world the

culture, history and essential nature of the country.

In the case of the 2010 Winter Games, this was done mainly through the Cultural Olympiad, the Olympic and Paralympic torch relays and the opening and closing ceremonies.

The Cultural Olympiad consisted of a series of three festivals (over three years) of popular and fine art that were held in the Vancouver-Whistler corridor as part of the Games.

The Vancouver 2010 Olympic Torch Relay garnered a lot of attention. The torch was lit in Olympia, Greece, on October 26, 2009. Once on Canadian soil, it travelled approximately 45,000 kilometres in 106 days, making it the longest relay in Olympic history. The torch was carried by some 12,000 Canadians and arrived in Vancouver on February 12, 2010. The torch travelled through 190 localities, where celebrations were organized.

The Opening Ceremony of the XXI Olympic Winter Games was held on February 12, 2010, in Vancouver's BC Place Stadium. The ceremony lasted three hours and included celebrations of our country's history as well as standard Olympic protocol. The ceremony ended when the Olympic Cauldron was lit. The Games' closing ceremony took place on February 28, 2010, in the same location. The closing ceremony also included standard protocol and performances that highlighted Canada's distinctive character.

Observations

Cultural component before the Games

Countdown

On February 12, 2009, a ceremony was held in Vancouver that marked the start of the countdown to the Games. The entire ceremony was in English, with the exception of a song translated at the last minute into French. People involved in the Games who were interviewed by the Office of the Commissioner felt that this showed VANOC's lack of sensitivity regarding linguistic duality during the cultural performances.

Cultural Olympiad

The prominence of French-language artists and projects progressively intensified over the three years of the Cultural Olympiad. This was a component of the Games that particularly interested the Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique, which suggested the names of French-speaking artists to VANOC. British Columbia's Francophone community was said to be somewhat

disappointed by the first year's program, in 2008. Of the 80 projects in that year, 12% featured French-speaking artists, but few of these were from British Columbia. The participation of Francophones improved progressively: in 2009, 21% of the projects were by French-speaking artists, and in 2010, 27% of the 193 projects featured French-speaking artists. For the three Cultural Olympiads, approximately 18% of the French-speaking artists came from outside Quebec. Sometimes French-speaking artists were teamed up with English-speaking artists, which nicely reflected linguistic duality and allowed lesser known French-speaking artists from British Columbia to broaden their audience. In summary, this component of the Games was well handled.

Olympic Torch Relay⁷

The organizers of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Torch Relay at VANOC and Canadian Heritage made significant efforts to present celebrations that reflected linguistic duality. They also received valuable assistance from the Canadian Foundation for Cross-Cultural Dialogue and the Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique, which began by suggesting that sites with a French-speaking population be selected as stops for the torch. Everyone seemed satisfied with the route chosen. The number of days the torch spent in Quebec increased from 10 to 13. The Foundation succeeded in ensuring that a Francophone community representative sat on the organizing committee for celebrations in 96 out of the 190 localities where the torch stopped. The Fédération did the same for the localities in British Columbia.

Canadian Heritage said that one of its representatives participated in each of the 190 community celebrations in order to work with VANOC in resolving official languages-related issues as they arose. VANOC officials who were following the torch's journey were bilingual. The masters of ceremonies were also bilingual. While these measures meant that linguistic duality was adequately reflected in the celebrations in a number of localities and that the two official language communities were brought closer together, the situation was not satisfactory everywhere. When the torch from Olympia arrived in Victoria, British Columbia, the French language was rather less than prominent. Only the representatives of the two sponsors present spoke in both languages.

Municipalities had a major role to play in organizing the welcome ceremonies for the torch. While several municipalities participated in the efforts mentioned above, linguistic duality was not adequately reflected in all the welcome ceremonies for the torch. For example, no French was used in some municipalities in Nova Scotia. The French aspect was also virtually nonexistent in British Columbia, particularly in Maillardville, a neighbourhood in Coquitlam (part of Metro Vancouver), which has had a dynamic French-speaking community for 100 years. A federal MP also reported a similar problem in Moncton, New Brunswick. Tighter coordination with municipal authorities and stricter monitoring of operational details on the part of VANOC and Canadian Heritage would have prevented problems such as these.

For example, the masters of ceremonies, who in principle should have spoken both official languages, did not always do so. Interviewees said that in some places, they noticed that the percentage of French in the celebrations was proportional to the size of the French-speaking community in these localities; this interpretation is somewhat limited. Canadian Heritage representatives stated that they had had trouble convincing those in charge of the relay that it was necessary to give French proper representation.

Some incidents defied explanation: the absence of French was simply staggering at the welcome ceremony for the Olympic torch at City Hall in Ottawa, Ontario, on December 12, 2009, especially since the celebration was organized by a bilingual municipal administration and was scheduled to be bilingual.

Despite these missteps, there were some very positive points: the large number of Francophones and francophiles across the country who encouraged their municipalities to include a French component in the celebrations, and the way French-speaking Canadians gathered and worked together on Torch Relay activities and on raising awareness of their presence among their fellow citizens.

Olympic Games Opening Ceremony

Rarely does a country have the opportunity to present itself to the whole world, except during major international events, such as international exhibitions, summits and sporting events. These unique opportunities require a concerted effort to properly represent the country, its culture, its values and its symbols. All Canadians must be able to recognize themselves in the image presented to the world.

⁷ Note that these pages only deal with the Olympic Torch Relay and not the Paralympic Torch Relay, which took place from March 3 to 12, 2010.

In this context, the opening ceremony was the most important performance of the Games. It was seen by hundreds of millions of viewers across the globe and was thus a unique opportunity to show the world that linguistic duality is a fundamental trait of the Canadian identity. In the financial contribution agreement between Canadian Heritage and VANOC, there was a clause that stated that the obligations set forth in the *Official Languages Act* should be taken into account when organizing the opening ceremony. VANOC officials had indicated that the ceremony would adequately reflect both languages.

The use of French in the opening ceremony sparked a passionate debate, as evidenced by the volume of letters on this topic sent to newspapers around the country, the number of comments that appeared on social media sites like Twitter and the quantity of communications received by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages.⁸

Clear and repeated explanations as to the balance between English and French content in the opening ceremony (in both the visual and spoken components) were given to VANOC by Canadian Heritage and the parliamentary standing committees on official languages, and by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, both in the December 2008 study and in the September 2009 follow-up report. There were also language clauses in the contribution agreements that accompanied the federal government's \$20 million contribution. Despite all of this, VANOC clearly gave less prominence to French during the cultural component of the ceremony. As mentioned in the introduction, 38 admissible complaints regarding this issue were submitted to the Office of the Commissioner, each deploring the glaring disparity between English and French.

Analysis of the ceremony's content as part of the Commissioner's investigation confirmed that, with regard to protocol, English and French were equally prominent. The bilingual version of the national anthem was sung and the Olympic hymn included parts in French. The arrival of each country's delegation into the stadium, the welcome by the four host First Nations and the introduction of the performers were all announced in both languages. However, the narrative part of the cultural component was almost exclusively in English. Except for Jean-Pierre Ferland's "Un peu plus haut, un peu plus loin," sung by Quebec singer

Garou at the end of the ceremony, all the songs and all the spoken texts were in English. Canadian Heritage expressed its disappointment at the fact that a last-minute change had taken place in the staging of the ceremony. The quotations read by Canadian actor Donald Sutherland that should have been read in French—including a poem by François-Xavier Garneau—were instead read in English. Canadian Heritage said that it had tried, unsuccessfully, to change the situation.

VANOC and Canadian Heritage pointed out that there were visual components illustrating French-Canadian culture (for example, the legend of the *Chasse-Galerie*, or flying canoe), as well as performers who came from Francophone Canada, particularly in the segments featuring the fiddlers and the aerial acrobats of Montréal's National Circus School. They defended the position that linguistic duality is measured not only by what is heard in French, but also by the contributions of Canada's French-speaking community as a whole (e.g., the designers, choreographers, decorators, dancers and musicians).

The Office of the Commissioner feels that non-spoken performances by Francophone artists cannot compensate for the lack of participation by French-speaking Canadians expressing themselves in their language in song, speeches or in other ways.

The advisory group responsible for the content of the opening and closing ceremonies was a closed group of six people, whose meetings were held in secret, according to Olympic tradition. Canadian Heritage was represented by a high-level person. The final decisions on content fell to the VANOC producer and officials. However, some interviewees said that they thought that having a Canadian Heritage representative within the advisory group would ensure that the ceremony had a proper balance of official languages but that they had been disappointed with the result.⁹

Clearly, neither VANOC nor Canadian Heritage was unaware of the importance of the content of the opening ceremony and the unique opportunity it presented to promote the country's linguistic duality through the inclusion of visual and spoken components in both French and English. The subject had been discussed many times, reminders had been issued and the expectations had been clearly defined.

⁸ The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages received 89 letters regarding the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games. Most dealt with the use of French during the Games and offered widely varying opinions on the subject.

⁹ Note that the interviews conducted for this report are completely separate from and with different people than those conducted as part of the investigation by the Office of the Commissioner on the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games.

French was more prominent in the closing ceremony, even though the celebrity tributes were in English only and the choice of the song, *The Maple Leaf Forever*, was perhaps not the best idea. The opening and closing ceremonies of the Paralympic Games also gave French the proper prominence.

Place de la Francophonie

The Place de la Francophonie was a parallel project to the 2010 Olympic Winter Games. Located on Granville Island, an urban complex in False Creek in downtown Vancouver managed by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the Place de la Francophonie was established by the Canadian Foundation for Cross-Cultural Dialogue, with the help of financial contributions from Canadian Heritage and Western Economic Diversification Canada. The goal of the Place de la Francophonie was to bring together Francophones and francophiles on site during the Games by organizing cultural events in French.

The Place de la Francophonie, which ran for 18 days, was a great success according to many people. Every day there were activities, exhibits, performances and various cultural events so that Francophone and francophile visitors from Canada and the rest of the world could appreciate the richness of French-Canadian culture.

Many French-speaking artists from across the country, including approximately 100 from British Columbia, gave performances or presented their work. The Place de la Francophonie made a significant contribution to the promotion of the French language and culture in Vancouver. It was written up in *The Vancouver Sun*, which awarded it a “gold medal” in the “Olympics of Party” category to pay tribute to the quality of its programming, the atmosphere on site and its originality.

The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages had an information booth at the Place de la Francophonie in order to be present at the Games and inform the public of its role. Over 3,000 people, whether Francophones, francophiles or members of the English-speaking majority, visited the booth.

Lessons learned

The cultural component of the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games took place almost exclusively in English. Clearly the approach will need to be reviewed in the future as those in charge did not fully grasp the need for linguistic duality to be fully represented in an event of this importance. The members of the ceremony’s organizing committee insisted that the Francophone presence should be measured not only by what was heard in French, but also by the contribution of French-speaking designers, choreographers, decorators, dancers and musicians. This is a very narrow interpretation of clause 1.k) of the Multiparty Agreement. Future agreements should contain a version of this clause that is much clearer and more explicit.

According to Canadian Heritage’s information, an Angus Reid poll showed that only 50% of Canadian respondents and 41% of respondents in Quebec stated that the proportion of French language and culture in the ceremony was just about right. In the opinion of the Office of the Commissioner, this is a poor result for an event of this size. It seems that the people in charge of the opening and closing ceremonies did not fully understand Canada’s historical, political and social context, of which linguistic duality and French-speaking culture are essential components, nor were they sufficiently aware of the cultural sensibilities of the two official language communities.

The Commissioner acknowledges the complexity of organizing this kind of celebration and the limited influence of Canadian Heritage over the content of the opening ceremony. However, he finds it deplorable that the language clauses inserted by Canadian Heritage into the contribution agreement were not more explicit regarding the presence of French in the cultural component of the opening ceremony and the adequate representation of official language communities.

The controversy over the opening ceremony will doubtless alert federal authorities to the importance of maintaining control over the balance between English and French in the opening and closing ceremonies of major events. They should review the standard official languages provisions concerning these ceremonies to ensure greater transparency and identify any gaps so as to be able to take any necessary corrective measures.

The establishment of a designated site for Francophone culture during the Games was a very positive initiative for promoting the French aspect of linguistic duality and sharing it with thousands of people. It also increased the visibility of local Francophone communities.

The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation has informed the Office of the Commissioner that French will also feature more prominently in the programming of events taking place on Granville Island for Canada Day and other festivals. This is one of the Games' legacies for the Vancouver region's French-speaking community. According to some people interviewed by the Office of the Commissioner, the flip side of the coin is that the Place de la Francophonie did not produce spin-offs or leave a tangible legacy for British Columbia's French-speaking community, for example, in the form of permanent facilities.

Future outlook

The Government of Canada should, through Canadian Heritage or any other organization representing it, include explicit language clauses in its contribution agreements that clearly define the expectations regarding the balance of content between the two official languages in the spoken components (for example, in speeches, songs and poems); ensure that Government of Canada representatives who fully understand the scope of linguistic duality sit on the committee responsible for organizing the opening and closing ceremonies; maintain control over the balance between the two official languages; and diligently monitor the situation.

The idea of including the official language minority community by creating a cultural showcase is certainly to be encouraged. The Place de la Francophonie was a success, but other initiatives are possible, as long as they are given high visibility.

5. COMMUNICATIONS

Context

Communications with the public and other client groups are an essential aspect when it comes to respecting the public's right to be served in the official language of their choice and reflecting Canada's bilingualism.

The main factors to be considered are signage, information and promotional documents, Web sites and information communicated orally or visually, such as results and commentary.

In order to successfully perform this enormous task, sufficient high-quality translation and interpretation resources were required.

The cooperation of the province and the cities of Vancouver and Whistler was also important in order to create a bilingual atmosphere through signage, documentation and services.

Observations

Translation and interpretation

Until the summer of 2009, VANOC's internal translation service managed to meet translation needs fairly well. However, following an internal evaluation in the summer of 2009, it became clear that the resources in place could not handle the considerable increase in texts to be translated before and during the Games. VANOC, which employed six translators at the time, estimated that it would need an additional 40 translators and an estimated translation budget of \$5.3 million. It therefore planned not to translate the athletes' biographies and some of the manuals, as these represented a significant volume of the translation work. The decision not to translate certain documents that were required to be translated under Annex A of the Multiparty Agreement showed that certain VANOC officials thought that they could disregard official languages requirements. The translation of Info 2010, the system that provided up-to-date information to the media, also presented major difficulties, because of VANOC's limited resources.

Given how important translation and interpretation resources were to presenting fully bilingual Games and given VANOC's shortage of funds, Minister of Canadian Heritage James Moore announced in September 2009 an additional contribution of \$7.7 million, of which \$5.3 million was for translation and interpretation.¹⁰ After lengthy discussions, an agreement was officially signed on September 8, 2009, between VANOC, Canadian Heritage and the Translation Bureau.

According to the Translation Bureau and Canadian Heritage, the total cost of the Translation Bureau's services amounted to \$3.4 million, rather than the originally estimated \$5.3 million. The difference can be explained by the fact that the volume of words to be translated was less than

¹⁰ The rest of the contribution was to cover the costs of ensuring that signage, displays and medal ceremonies were in both official languages.

predicted and also by the fact that the translators were able to save time, as the changes to be made to the athletes' biographies were easily identifiable in the computer system, something that had not initially been thought possible.

As soon as the agreement was signed, the Translation Bureau's translation team was integrated into VANOC's team. It was the Translation Bureau that was ultimately responsible for the quality of the documents produced by VANOC.

A centre comprising 40 translators was set up in Gatineau, Quebec, in early January 2010. It handled translation of the Info 2010 content and the athletes' biographies. Some 5,000 biographies were translated and 15,000 updates were made. The fact that all the biography updates were done in both languages marked a first for the Olympic Games. The biographies were accessible to the public on VANOC's Web site. Another team of 40 translators travelled to Vancouver for the Games and a team of eight translators travelled to the Paralympic Games. A third centre of 20 translators was established in Quebec City to handle any overflow from the translators in Vancouver. The Translation Bureau's analysis of interpretation needs showed that VANOC had properly re-evaluated the needs for the Olympic Games, but not those for the Paralympic Games, which is why the Translation Bureau assigned six interpreters and a coordinator to cover these Games.

Most of the interviewees, including the VANOC representatives, highlighted the Translation Bureau's excellent service, its professionalism and the quality of its work. Once again, Canada demonstrated its expertise in the field of translation, thanks in large part to the Translation Bureau. Without the additional financial support from the Government of Canada and the arrival of the Translation Bureau, VANOC would not have been able to meet all the requirements of Annex A regarding communications with the public. The Bureau's translators put in 25,000 hours of work to help VANOC meet its obligations.

This situation also shows that the translation needs and, to a lesser extent, the interpretation needs had not been properly assessed at the start, which explains why VANOC had not allocated the necessary funds in its budget.

Signage

Many people who attended the Games said that the bilingual signage was impressive. According to what the Office of the Commissioner's employees were able to see during the Olympic Games, all VANOC signage was bilingual at the Olympic venues and in the downtown areas of Vancouver and Whistler, as well as at Vancouver International Airport. People interviewed by the Office of the Commissioner confirmed that this was also the case during the Paralympic Games. The signage was equal in both languages and generally of good quality. A VANOC team inspected all the facilities before the Games to ensure that the signage was compliant. The signage at the Richmond Olympic Oval was initially in English only, but was finally made bilingual through pressure from groups including the Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique and parliamentarians. Some international and national sponsors displayed advertising billboards in both languages. Sky Train stations also sported bilingual signage from federal institutions such as the Royal Canadian Mint, and sponsors such as Coca-Cola. The cities of Vancouver and Whistler also put up bilingual signs to welcome and direct visitors. Display panels and signage installed by federal institutions as part of the Games were also in both languages. All these elements created a tangible display of linguistic duality in the downtown areas of Vancouver and Whistler. Even so, it is unfortunate that not all sponsors advertised in both languages.

Information and promotional documents

General information documents for the public were produced in both languages. The official Olympic Spectator Guide was available in two versions, one in English and one in French. The tickets were fully bilingual, including the small print on the back. The Vancouver 2010 Cultural Olympiad Program Guide was also in both languages, as were accreditations. Targeted information documents for specific groups, such as officials and the media, were also in both languages, including the accreditation manual, the accreditation form and the schedule. As previously mentioned, the athletes' biographies and the Info 2010 system were also in both languages.

The Office of the Commissioner's staff on site did, however, discover an anomaly: they were not able to find the souvenir program in French at the site stores, the airport or the Olympic Superstore in downtown Vancouver.

Web sites

VANOC's Web site was one of the main ways to communicate with the public. The myriad press releases were posted there, along with a lot of other information on the Games, such as competition schedules and results. Everything was published simultaneously in both languages. Early on, there were some errors in the French press releases, but the issue was rapidly resolved.

Initiatives by the province and the two host cities are also noteworthy. The Tourism BC and Tourism Vancouver Web sites were translated, and some sections of the Vancouver and Whistler Web sites were available in French. The two cities received funding from Canadian Heritage to help them provide services in French. The Société de développement économique de la Colombie-Britannique, a Francophone organization, assisted in the translation of the Tourism BC Web site.

Public information, announcements and commentary

In general, VANOC succeeded in respecting the requirements of Annex A relating to public information and announcements. It was possible to be served in either language without any difficulty at the information booths at all 15 venues. Press conferences were held in both languages. As explained in section 6, volunteers provided most of the information to the public.

Apart from announcements in English only during the women's freestyle skiing final and some of the figure skating competitions, the Games were a great success from the point of view of announcements and commentary in both languages during the competitions (e.g., introducing the athletes, announcing the split-times and reporting the results). The quality of the French, which came first as required by Olympic Movement protocol, was excellent. The same was true in the Paralympic Games. These elements of the competitions contributed to giving the spectators and television viewers a clear image of Canadian linguistic duality.

There were some problems, however. For example, at the UBC Thunderbird Arena, where the women's hockey competition was held, the recording of Canadian celebrities that was playing as visitors entered the arena was in English only. During some visits, employees of the Office of the Commissioner did not receive service in French at the downtown Olympic store or at the Canada Hockey Place store. They did, however, receive service in French at the Pacific Coliseum from a volunteer who was not wearing a "Bonjour" badge.

There was one situation that certainly could have been resolved if VANOC had intervened earlier with the International Olympic Committee. The on-site display boards that showed the real-time results for the competitions were in English only. VANOC informed the Games Federal Secretariat of the situation in the fall of 2009, and the Secretariat recommended that VANOC approach the International Olympic Committee as soon as possible to find a solution. However, Omega, supplier of the display boards and international partner reporting directly to the International Olympic Committee, said that it was impossible to make the necessary technical modifications in time. VANOC or the Games Federal Secretariat should have raised this issue much earlier, especially since the Grand Témoin de la Francophonie for the Turin 2006 Olympic Winter Games, Lise Bissonnette, had already mentioned it in her report. However, the video screens presented the results in both languages and the commentators were bilingual.

Host cities

The host cities of Vancouver and Whistler made great efforts to provide the public with information in both languages. The 311 call centre and the Vancouver communications centre both had bilingual employees. Of the 600 employees who comprised Vancouver's host city team, 20% were bilingual. In Whistler, 23% of the 660 volunteer participants were bilingual and 15% of the 90 volunteers from the Village Host Program could speak both languages. This data was confirmed with the cities of Vancouver and Whistler. Ken Melamed, Whistler's bilingual mayor, merits praise for his proactive commitment to official languages.

Lessons learned

To be able to present an image of a bilingual country through signage, as did these Games, the cooperation of the host cities and the sponsors is needed in addition to the work of the organizing committee, which produced excellent results. The same is true for the services offered to the public by the host cities.

VANOC showed that it was possible to update a Web site by simultaneously posting English and French versions of Web pages. This is an important lesson, as the Internet is increasingly becoming the general public's preferred source of information.

Overall, VANOC was very successful in providing information to the public in both official languages (e.g., information documents, athlete introductions, event results, commentary) and in effectively communicating with the specialized groups such as the media. However, it needed additional help from the Government of Canada to produce all the French documentation that it had already committed to producing. This eleventh-hour bailout should not become a precedent for future events.

Future outlook

It is essential that clauses applying to national sponsors be included in the language requirements for major events so that Canada's linguistic duality is reflected more completely. International sponsors should be informed of Canada's language situation and of the importance of respecting official languages requirements. Some of the international sponsors of the Vancouver Games showed that this was entirely possible.

VANOC's practices regarding communications with the public in both languages, particularly via the Web site and through announcements and commentary during the competitions, could serve as an example for other major events in the future.

Organizers of future events could also draw inspiration from the collaborative model of the host cities of Vancouver and Whistler. Even though they have no formal official languages obligations, these cities still effected measures to provide service to the public in both languages—by making parts of their Web sites available in French and by ensuring that there were bilingual volunteers and information service employees.

The Office of the Commissioner considers translation and interpretation services to be essential because they determine the extent to which event organizers can offer pertinent and high-quality information to visitors in both official languages simultaneously. Therefore, the cost for this should be included in the Government of Canada's base contribution to the organizing committee. During major events, a partner should be in place right from the start with the necessary expertise and capacity to handle a high volume of translation work within short deadlines, like the Translation Bureau was able to do at the Vancouver Games.

In the future, any organization responsible for a major event should require that the real-time display boards (such as those that display the results of the competition) be able to present information in both official languages.

6. VOLUNTEERS

Context

Volunteers were at the heart of communications with the general public and the other specialized groups, such as the media, athletes and dignitaries. They were the ones who guided people at the sites, answered their questions and gave them instructions. VANOC succeeded in recruiting 20,000 volunteers, of whom 14% to 15% (almost 3,000 people) were bilingual, according to the figures provided before the Games. All the interviewees emphasized the enthusiasm and helpfulness of the volunteers who contributed to the success of the Games. They represented the face of Canada, including its linguistic duality.

Observations

Being able to recruit enough bilingual volunteers was a source of concern before the Games for the Commissioner of Official Languages, parliamentarians, Canadian Heritage and organizations representing French-speaking communities. The fact that the primary source of bilingual individuals was on the other side of the country and the fact that the volunteers had to find their own accommodations and pay for their own travel made it more difficult to recruit bilingual volunteers.

To increase the number of bilingual volunteers, VANOC toured eastern Canada in the spring of 2009. The Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique also contributed

actively to finding bilingual volunteers. The Games Federal Secretariat discussed the deployment of bilingual volunteers with VANOC in the fall of 2009 and also held discussions with VANOC to ensure that they were ready to address certain situations, such as attrition. A roving team was created to compensate for the predicted attrition rate of 30% among the volunteers, thereby fulfilling one of the recommendations made by the Commissioner of Official Languages in his September 2009 follow-up report.

As VANOC did not provide a report after the Games, we do not know the actual number of bilingual volunteers who worked during the Games. VANOC said that when it was checking the language abilities of the volunteers at the time of their accreditation, it realized that some 400 volunteers who had not been identified as bilingual could communicate in both languages. It gave them each a “Bonjour” badge. Employees of the Office of the Commissioner who were on site reported several instances where bilingual volunteers had unfortunately not been assigned to duties requiring bilingualism.

VANOC included some standard phrases into the volunteers’ pocket guide to enable them to provide basic service to visitors in French and allow them to seek help from a bilingual colleague. The effectiveness of this initiative has not been assessed, however.

VANOC assigned more bilingual volunteers to strategic locations such as the media centre, accreditation, and information booths for athletes and dignitaries. The proportion of these bilingual volunteers was normally around 30% to 50%. VANOC also tried to ensure that there were bilingual volunteers in certain specific circumstances. For example, the families of Quebec athletes were welcomed and accompanied to the buses by bilingual volunteers. VANOC volunteers at the airport were also able to offer service in both languages.

Front-line services provided by volunteers were available in English and in French in almost all cases, but there were exceptions in certain places, as mentioned below. The fact that the bilingual volunteers wore an easily visible badge saying “Bonjour” helped to identify them.

Because bilingual volunteers were assigned to strategic locations, there were sometimes none at other sites where there could be contact with the public. The security check points, supervised by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, had VANOC volunteers but were not always able to offer

bilingual services. When an employee from the Office of the Commissioner visited the Olympic Cauldron, service in French was very limited. The spectator marshal greeted the crowd in English and French, but the instructions guiding the spectators were in English only. None of the on-site volunteers had a “Bonjour” badge and all interaction with the volunteers was in English. When an employee of the Office of the Commissioner went through the security check at the Pacific Coliseum, none of the volunteers present was able to provide service in French.

Most of the unilingual volunteers followed the established procedure and directed French-speaking members of the public to bilingual colleagues. In the experience of the Office of the Commissioner’s staff on site, about three quarters of the unilingual volunteers did this willingly. However, some volunteers apologized for their unilingualism without seeking assistance, or worse still, simply ignored the question. Canadian Heritage representatives also mentioned that some volunteers had not followed the established system. Two interviewees who attended the Paralympic Games said that they were able to receive services in French and that the number of bilingual volunteers seemed sufficient.

The City of Vancouver was responsible for the celebration sites; however, services to the public had to be offered in both languages because Canadian Heritage had contributed funding for these sites. City volunteers wore a “Demandez-moi” badge to indicate that they spoke French. There again, while there were some volunteers at the downtown Vancouver celebration site who could speak French, there were none on the two occasions when employees of the Office of the Commissioner visited. At the celebration site in Yaletown, Vancouver, no effort was made to try to find a bilingual volunteer. Unfortunately, these situations experienced by the Office of the Commissioner’s staff reflected negatively on the work of the volunteers who did call a bilingual colleague when necessary in order to ensure that visitors could enjoy service in French.

Employees of the Office of the Commissioner who were on site at the Olympic Games found that the Canada Pavilion provided services in both official languages, and that the exhibitions in the Pavilion were bilingual. The efforts of certain provinces—like Manitoba, New Brunswick and Quebec—should be highlighted, as they also provided services in both English and French in their pavilions.

Lessons learned

The many bilingual volunteers, clearly identified with a “Bonjour” badge, endeavoured to present a bilingual image of Canada. It is clear that VANOC invested a lot of effort in recruiting bilingual volunteers, notably by extending its recruitment zone to eastern Canada.

VANOC was right to assign bilingual volunteers to strategic locations, but this left gaps at other points of contact with the public. Several people said that VANOC needed more bilingual volunteers. Furthermore, some of the unilingual volunteers were clearly not made sufficiently aware of the importance of finding a bilingual colleague to serve French-speaking clients. Canadian Heritage representatives said that they had asked VANOC, without success, to provide better training on active offer of service.

Future outlook

VANOC’s efforts to recruit and deploy bilingual volunteers were a good starting point and could be used as a model for hiring bilingual people for other international events. Extending the recruitment zone is very important when local pool bilingual resources are not sufficient.

Bilingual staff and volunteers must be recruited in sufficient numbers to cover all points of contact with the public. Proper training must be provided on the active offer of service in both languages, including instructions for unilingual volunteers to refer to a bilingual colleague. Official language communities should be targeted as a primary source of bilingual volunteers.

7. BROADCASTING THE GAMES

Context

Broadcasting the Olympic and Paralympic Games in both official languages across the country was a major issue for French-speaking communities. Resolving this issue was like trying to run an obstacle course.

The International Olympic Committee granted broadcasting rights for the Games in February 2005 to Canada’s Olympic Broadcast Media Consortium, which comprised CTVglobemedia and Rogers, and included the participation of RDS, RIS and V to cover the Francophone market.

Observations

The problem lay in the fact that the channels that were to broadcast the Olympic Games in French—RDS, RIS and V—only reached a limited number of regions outside Quebec, which deprived many French-speaking Canadians of the opportunity to watch the Games in their own language and went against the principle of equality of status for English and French in Canada. The parliamentary standing committees on official languages, the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne (FCFA) and other associations representing local French-speaking communities, and the Commissioner of Official Languages intervened on numerous occasions to resolve the situation.

In response to these steps and following discussions with government representatives, the consortium agreed to provide the RDS, RIS and V signals free of charge during the Games to digital cable and satellite distributors outside of Quebec in order to ensure French broadcast of the Games.

However, because the RDS signal was not transferred to the analogue service for the duration of the Games, this solution excluded French-speaking households in minority areas that used analogue cable and, of course, all those that do not subscribe to broadcast services. Once again, following much manoeuvring between the consortium, the FCFA and other French-speaking community associations, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), the Cable Public Affairs Channel (CPAC), VANOC, the major cable distributors, the Prime Minister’s special representative for the Games and the Commissioner of Official Languages, an agreement was announced on February 11, 2010, the day before the opening of the Olympic Games.

Under this agreement, the Olympic Games were broadcast in French on CPAC, a channel created by a partnership between the major Canadian cable distribution companies that is available to all cable subscribers, as well as RDS, RIS and V. This innovative agreement enabled the vast majority of French-speaking Canadians to access reports on the Olympic Games in their own language, just like their fellow English-speaking citizens.

The Commissioner wishes to thank Konrad W. von Finckenstein, President of the CRTC, for his exceptional cooperation in this matter.

Cable distributor Shaw also deserves mention for ensuring, even before the agreement was signed, that the Games would be broadcast in French on its network in the Vancouver region by replacing the Bravo! channel with the V channel signal during the Games.

It is important to note that broadcasting the Games on CPAC was possible only because Parliament was not sitting at the time of the Olympic Games. The Paralympic Games, which took place after Parliament had reconvened, were not broadcast on CPAC. Therefore, only subscribers to certain cable packages were able to watch the Paralympic Games in French, which were broadcast on RDS and RIS Info Sports, but not V. English coverage was available much more widely, as the Paralympic Games were broadcast in part on CTV as well as on cable channels TSN and Rogers Sportsnet. Francophone associations criticized this situation.

Lessons learned

Canada came very close to not being able to broadcast the Games in both official languages across the country. It took numerous interventions by French-speaking community organizations, including the FCFA and members of the House of Commons and Senate standing committees on official languages in order for the consortium and the cable distributors, in collaboration with the CRTC and CPAC, to find a solution to enable the Olympic Games to be broadcast across Canada in both languages. Moreover, this agreement was not reached until the day before the opening of the Olympic Games. Canada cannot again allow itself to risk waiting until the last minute to resolve the issue of broadcasting the Olympic Games to all Canadians in both official languages.

Future outlook

Major events, such as the Olympic and Paralympic Games, create a sense of unity among Canadians and enrich Canadian identity. All Canadians must have access to these events in the official language of their choice. Not all major sporting events receive media coverage as broad as the Olympic and Paralympic Games. The guiding principle of any broadcast agreement, whether for television, Web or any other medium, should be to offer equal access to the event in both official languages. If an event is broadcast from coast to coast in English, it must likewise be broadcast across the country in French. For future major events that are to be broadcast, this issue must be resolved very early in the process by the consortium that wins the broadcast

rights. The Government of Canada needs to be proactive right from the start in facilitating negotiation of the necessary agreements to ensure that the event is broadcast equally in both languages.

8. PERFORMANCE OF FEDERAL INSTITUTIONS CITED IN THE SEPTEMBER 2009 FOLLOW-UP REPORT

In his September 2009 follow-up report, the Commissioner of Official Languages asked 11 federal institutions, including Canadian Heritage, to report on the results of their evaluations of their official languages performance during the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. He also asked them to share their positive experiences and lessons learned.

The following federal institutions were evaluated in the follow-up report: Air Canada, the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, the Canada Border Services Agency, the Vancouver Airport Authority, the Greater Toronto Airports Authority, Service Canada, Parks Canada, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Canada Post Corporation.

The evaluation described in this section is based on the responses that these institutions submitted to the Commissioner in the summer of 2010, following his recommendation. This section does not include all of the information submitted, but rather the information that the Office of the Commissioner considers to be the most relevant.

Institutions serving the travelling public

Context

Of the institutions whose mandate is to serve the travelling public, five were selected as having the most important role to play with respect to the Games: Air Canada, the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, the Canada Border Services Agency, the Greater Toronto Airports Authority and the Vancouver Airport Authority.

These five federal institutions were the first—and in some cases, the last—point of contact for the thousands of Canadian and foreign visitors who came to the Games. It was essential that they project an image of Canadian linguistic duality.

Observations

Air Canada

Air Canada informed us that its linguistic affairs division was involved in its planning activities. The relative lack of bilingual capacity at Vancouver International Airport was identified from the outset as an area needing improvement. The measures taken to correct the situation, like at other major airports across the country, consisted of providing staff with language training, increasing bilingual resources and ensuring that there was active offer of service in both languages.

The air carrier told us that several training courses on active offer had been provided to airport staff in Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg and Toronto. It also said that some 100 bilingual managers and retirees from across the country volunteered to go to Vancouver to help increase the company's bilingual capacity. These people were assigned to strategic positions, such as arrivals, check-in and baggage claim.

As another way of improving its active offer, Air Canada produced a video called *Bonjour! Hello!*, which was broadcast throughout the institution in both languages. This video was adapted from the Parks Canada video developed in 2009 that described ways of providing active offer and implementing the necessary administrative measures for service delivery in the official language of the client's choice.

In response to one of the Commissioner's recommendations in his September 2009 follow-up report, Air Canada stated that it worked closely with the Vancouver Airport Authority, the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority and the Canada Border Services Agency to discuss best official languages practices. These institutions did not detail the best practices or the lessons learned that might have resulted from these meetings. The Office of the Commissioner would like such exchanges to continue between these institutions as part of their daily activities.

Portable digital players were distributed to unilingual agents working in airports that did not have pre-recorded message systems at the boarding gates. The carrier said that this way of announcing the flights will remain in place until these airports have such systems. Although the Office of the Commissioner welcomes the arrival of new technologies as innovative and effective measures to support service delivery, it is concerned by the use of a recording in French to replace a bilingual agent, because French-speaking

travellers will obviously have difficulty obtaining information from a unilingual agent using a recording. While the Office of the Commissioner is conscious of the operational pace of federal institutions, it maintains that this administrative measure must remain temporary and not become a permanent replacement for bilingual agents.

In its response, Air Canada stated that it felt that the resources assigned to Vancouver during the Games to ensure appropriate bilingual service delivery exceeded the demand. The Office of the Commissioner is of the opinion that, in the context of an international event, this approach was more appropriate than risking a lack of resources, particularly as Air Canada was the official carrier of the Games.

Canadian Air Transport Security Authority

The Canadian Air Transport Security Authority (CATSA) stated that it had formed an Olympic Games working group to supervise preparations for the 2010 Winter Games and that the person responsible for official languages was a member of this group. It also informed us that regular messages had been sent in 2009 and 2010 to the staff in contact with the public to remind them of the importance of offering services in both languages.

CATSA informed us that it had offered bilingual services during the Games at the temporary security screening checkpoints established in British Columbia and in Calgary, Alberta. It specified that official languages requirements had been included in the contracts of the four security screening service providers in the airports mentioned above in the section on Air Canada. These contractors each received the full performance bonus for meeting the requirement of having a bilingual officer at each checkpoint.

To increase its bilingual personnel and capacity, CATSA and its contractors conducted a recruitment campaign across the country. According to CATSA's figures, 86 out of the 159 people recruited, or 54%, were bilingual.

CATSA required all security officers at bilingual airports and temporary screening checkpoints to complete its online learning module on active offer. As mentioned in the previous section, CATSA worked with Air Canada, the Canada Border Services Agency and the Vancouver Airport Authority to discuss best practices, thereby following up on one of the recommendations made by the Commissioner in his September 2009 follow-up report.

According to CATSA's operational monitoring program data, the rate of compliance regarding active offer was around 95% in the Toronto and Vancouver airports during the first three months of 2010.

All of those interviewed as part of this review who passed through the security checkpoint at Vancouver International Airport stated that they received excellent service in French. During their passage through security, employees of the Office of the Commissioner noted that an active offer was made and that service in French was available at certain times. This is encouraging, given CATSA's poor results obtained during the evaluation conducted by the Office of the Commissioner for the September 2009 follow-up report, but must be confirmed through more systematic observations.

The Office of the Commissioner is satisfied with CATSA's ability to identify an issue that arose during this process, which was that its employees had a low rate of participation in the active offer training. CATSA informed us that it would use all available mechanisms to correct the situation in the future.

Canada Border Services Agency

The Canada Border Services Agency informed us that it had established a working group several years before the Games. The official languages team was part of this group, which established a number of initiatives to prepare adequately for the Games, including initiatives concerning the bilingual capacity of the Agency and language training for staff.

Some 40 bilingual agents were assigned to certain key locations: for example, Vancouver International Airport and Toronto's Pearson International Airport. Ten bilingual employees were assigned to the Toronto airport to ensure active offer of service in both languages and direct travellers to the bilingual security desks throughout the Games.

In terms of language training, the Agency told us that a French instructor was on site at Vancouver Airport and that more than 5,000 agents across the country had taken a mandatory online training course.

The Agency also collaborated with Western Economic Development Canada and the Société de développement économique de la Colombie-Britannique, a Francophone community organization, to prepare a guide presenting the cultural activities offered by British Columbia's Francophone community during the Games as well as a bilingual map of downtown Vancouver and the Olympic and Paralympic facilities.

The Agency conducted no formal monitoring of its performance during the Games, even though it had stated that the working group would be responsible for this.

As highlighted in volume II of the Office of the Commissioner's annual report 2009–2010, the Canada Border Services Agency created tools and developed the training material that its officers needed to effectively offer Canadian and foreign visitors service in both official languages during the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games.

Vancouver Airport Authority

During the Office of the Commissioner's 2009 awareness campaign, the Vancouver Airport Authority stated that no specific steps would be taken for the Games, and that it did not expect an increase in the demand for services in French during this event. In response to the follow-up to the Commissioner's recommendation, the Authority informed us that it had established a working group tasked with examining the issues related to the use of official languages during the Games. A position of liaison officer, reporting to the Authority's Vice-President of 2010 Planning, was created to ensure that official languages were integrated into the planning of activities. The Vancouver Airport Authority announced these two initiatives during appearances before the parliamentary standing committees on official languages in the fall of 2009.

The Authority stated that it had assigned more than 130 people who spoke French fluently to serve the public in French and had held information sessions for its staff. A component on active offer had also been added to the employee training program.

The Authority established its own volunteer corps, identifiable by their khaki vests. The interactions that the Office of the Commissioner's staff had with the Authority's volunteers were positive. Several volunteers were able to respond to questions in French at various times. The Authority's staff and volunteers who were able to speak French wore a "Bonjour" badge, like the VANOC volunteers.

The Authority's response also indicated that a mystery traveller program had been established and that questions on service delivery in both official languages had been included in a client satisfaction survey. The Authority recorded a high level of satisfaction among clients as part of this survey. Unfortunately, the institution did not submit the survey results as part of its response and so we were unable to evaluate their performance on this matter.

The Authority stated that it had held information sessions for airport tenants and concessionaires regarding their official languages obligations. It also stated that it had put up posters at the concessions about the active offer. Language skills were included on the name badges for the concessionaires' employees.

During numerous interactions with airport concessionaires, employees of the Office of the Commissioner were unable to obtain services in French from some of them, particularly the car rental companies.

The Office of the Commissioner would like to emphasize that, among the institutions that responded to the recommendation to report on their performance during the Games, the Vancouver Airport Authority is one of the few institutions that shared with us a difficult challenge that it faced during the Games: delivery of bilingual service by the food service concessionaires. Many employees did not actively offer their services in French, despite the training and the reminders from the Authority. The experience of the Office of the Commissioner's staff with some of the food service concessionaires supports this observation. The Office of the Commissioner is encouraged to see that the Authority was able to identify the weak points in its performance during the Games. It is important that the Authority implement long-term corrective measures for the future.

Greater Toronto Airports Authority

The Greater Toronto Airports Authority (GTAA) offered only the briefest of responses to the Commissioner's request. The response indicated that before the Games, the GTAA had noted the need to direct travellers in transit to Vancouver to the boarding gate for their flight. Taking official languages requirements into account, the GTAA placed inukshuks in all the key places along the travellers' route. It also provided "Hello, bonjour" pins to its staff who provide information to the public.

It is unfortunate that the GTAA was not able to provide a more detailed response and that the response that was received by the Office of the Commissioner does not attest to the institution's good performance at the Olympic and Paralympic Games, events in which the GTAA had a major role to play as Canada's largest airport through which many visitors passed.

Lessons learned

It is clear that some institutions serving the travelling public knew how to develop creative solutions and, to a certain extent, step up to the plate by ensuring that bilingual staff would be present. It is important to mention that preparations must be made sufficiently in advance and involve appropriate key people. These preparations should include hiring bilingual staff, assigning them to the high-volume service points, periodically issuing reminders and offering training in both active offer and service delivery in another language. The reflex to go and find a colleague able to provide service in the official language of the public's choice is, unfortunately, not yet integrated into the institutions' current procedures. Active offer is essential, but making an active offer without actually being able to offer the service or find a colleague able to offer the service in the language of the client's choice is pointless. Active offer is only a means to inform the public that the service is available in both official languages. It is in the interest of these institutions to be able to welcome foreign visitors in the official language of their choice and present an image of Canada that includes linguistic duality.

In certain cases, systemic problems affected the institutions serving the travelling public. For example, difficulties in providing services in both languages at the food counters operated under third-party contracts with the Vancouver Airport Authority persisted throughout the Games. As indicated in volume II of the Office of the Commissioner's annual report 2009–2010, Air Canada proved that it was capable of meeting the challenge of being the official carrier of the Winter Olympic Games by investing the necessary resources, but there remain chronic problems regarding service to French-speaking passengers.

Future outlook

Federal institutions serving the travelling public are very often the first and last point of contact with the public at the beginning and end of the event. National and international sporting events necessarily involve an influx of visitors, which leads to an increase in the demand for services in both official languages. The necessary planning of resources must be done well before the event. A good training program on how to make an active offer and then provide services in the official language of the visitor's choice is essential to the smooth handling of large numbers of travellers.

Increasing the number of bilingual personnel in places that already have obligations under the *Official Languages Act* is a good practice to retain for future large-scale events.

It is important to consolidate bilingual capacity at bilingual service points so as to be able to meet the needs of a major influx of travellers.

Another good practice to bear in mind when preparing for a major event is to identify specific service points that do not have language obligations but would experience an increase in demand because of the greater volume of travellers for the event. This way, in addition to meeting their usual obligations, institutions serving the travelling public could also deal more easily with the increase in demand for services in both official languages.

Other key institutions serving the public

Context

In addition to the institutions serving the travelling public, some were identified as those that typical travellers may come into contact with during their visit to the Games. Four institutions were included in this category: Canada Post Corporation, Service Canada, Parks Canada and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

Canada Post Corporation was important for many Canadian and international travellers who wished to send or receive mail. As the one-stop shop for many Government of Canada services, Service Canada was an essential service point for visitors from Canada and abroad looking for information on our federal government's programs and services. Parks Canada is responsible for the management of many of our national parks and historic sites, including several in British Columbia and the Rockies that attracted visitors before, during and after the Games. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation manages Granville Island, which was home to the Place de la Francophonie as well as two other pavilions and numerous cultural events.

Given their numerous responsibilities towards the public, these four institutions needed to possess the necessary resources to offer bilingual services at all times, not only at designated service points, but also in areas frequented by visitors in the Vancouver-Whistler corridor.¹¹

Observations

Canada Post Corporation

Canada Post paid particular attention to service delivery in both languages, and made it part of the planning process starting in 2008. In addition to the four designated bilingual offices in the Vancouver region, Canada Post decided that the three offices at the Olympic site should offer services in English and French. As these post offices were operated by contractors on behalf of Canada Post, there was a clause in their contract defining their direct relationship with Canada Post as well as bilingual service delivery requirements. The federal institution was not able to control the hiring of personnel in these post offices, however, and it did not specify how many employees had to be bilingual. Canada Post hired five additional bilingual employees at its main post office in Vancouver. The Whistler post office was designated bilingual for the event and three bilingual employees were assigned there.

Canada Post's response included an interesting initiative. It sent a letter to hotels in the Vancouver region providing a list of its bilingual post offices so as to meet the public's needs. Canada Post also installed large-format bilingual posters of Canadian athletes on its building in downtown Vancouver.

Like most of the 11 institutions, Canada Post did not provide results concerning its bilingual service delivery performance.

Service Canada

Service Canada identified official languages as one of its priorities in the planning of its activities for the Games. In the context of this planning, it held discussions with the French-speaking community, particularly regarding how to increase its bilingual capacity for the Games. The institution then hired some 15 additional bilingual employees for the period of the Games. During its consultations with British Columbia's Francophone community, Service Canada committed to ensuring that its increased bilingual capacity and the official languages strategies developed during the Games would be a legacy for the community. The institution stated that the bilingual employees hired for the Games continued to be employed once the Games were over.

¹¹ According to the *Official Languages Act* and the *Official Languages (Communications with and Services to the Public) Regulations*, Parks Canada must offer services in both languages in all national parks. This situation differs from that of Service Canada and Canada Post, which offer services in both languages only at designated service points.

Service Canada established a temporary office in Whistler, and the eight employees assigned to this office were bilingual. The Richmond Service Canada Centre, located to the south of Vancouver, is not designated bilingual, but provided services in English and French nonetheless. Service Canada stated that the mobile service team had a good bilingual capacity both during the Olympic Games, where a complete bilingual presence was ensured throughout February in Whistler, and during the Paralympic Games, where a mixed team was created consisting of bilingual officers and officers experienced in providing service to people with physical disabilities.

Service Canada indicated that members of the public were systematically greeted in both official languages when they approached staff. According to Service Canada, 40,000 interactions took place with Canadian and foreign visitors during the Games, and each time, its staff greeted the public in both official languages.

Parks Canada

At Parks Canada, planning for the Olympic Games began in 2008. In 2009, a manager was appointed to oversee activities relating to this event. Because the Olympic Torch Relay was scheduled to cross a number of parks, Parks Canada focused its efforts on the Relay and included French-speaking communities in its communications plan for this event.

Parks Canada advised all managers of national parks and sites through which the Olympic Torch would pass to ensure that the country's linguistic duality and diversity was reflected in all Parks Canada activities. To do this, the managers made sure that official language communities participated in the preparations for the Relay celebrations.

Parks Canada shared its training module on active offer, called "Hello/Bonjour," which included a DVD, a workbook and a CD, with other federal institutions. As previously mentioned, Air Canada adapted this video for its own personnel.

Parks Canada informed us that telephone follow-ups were carried out to evaluate whether the services were offered actively in English and in French and whether they were provided in both languages. The institution said that it took the necessary corrective measures when weaknesses were revealed. The results of its follow-ups were not included in its response to the recommendation follow-up.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) manages Granville Island in the centre of Vancouver. Given that the Place de la Francophonie that was established during the Olympic Games was located on Granville Island, the CMHC needed to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in matters of official languages. Granville Island joined in the Cultural Olympiad and presented over 200 activities on the island. The *Winterruption* Festival showcased some 40 French-speaking artists.

The CMHC began its planning for the Games in 2008 and designated an official languages champion. It was able to count on the support of 12 French-speaking employees from its Vancouver office. The CMHC told us that 31 of its 161 volunteers, or 19%, were bilingual. The media centre had bilingual staff. All employees and volunteers working on-site received training in the active offer of bilingual services and were identified by a badge. An employee of the Office of the Commissioner confirmed that an employee wearing the badge was able to offer service in French.

The CMHC asked an independent firm to periodically review the performance of its offices in downtown Vancouver and on Granville Island regarding the availability of service in both official languages. It reported that the two offices received perfect marks in January 2010, according to its own evaluation.

The Commissioner would like to congratulate CMHC president Karen Kinsley for the institution's attention to official languages, as well as for the work of official languages managers in the preparation and execution of the institution's activities, as well as the monitoring of its performance during the Games. The CMHC was able to give clear accounts of the number of conversations held with the public in French, thus showing that it had evaluated its service delivery during the Games.

Additional mentions

Industry Canada

The Office of the Commissioner would like to highlight the fact that Industry Canada acted pro-actively in December 2009 by informing us of the status of its preparations made during the fall of 2009, despite the fact that, although the institution was targeted in the awareness campaign conducted by the Office of the Commissioner, it was not cited in the follow-up report.

Royal Canadian Mint

The Office of the Commissioner would also like to mention the Royal Canadian Mint even though this institution was not mentioned in the September 2009 follow-up report. As a federal institution and partner of the Games, the Royal Canadian Mint had a popular pavilion in downtown Vancouver where the public could see the Olympic medals. In the presence of the Office of the Commissioner's staff, the employees and volunteers working at this site were able to offer service to the public in French, both in the line-ups to get in and inside the pavilion. The Office of the Commissioner would like to congratulate this institution for having posters in both official languages in some of the Sky Train stations across Vancouver.

Canadian Tourism Commission

On a less positive note, we must also mention that the Canadian Tourism Commission—which was not cited in the follow-up report—could have ensured that the blog covering the Olympic Torch Relay and serving as a window to the world for this event was fully bilingual. Unfortunately, this blog was in French when the torch was in Quebec and in English when it was in the rest of Canada. Given that this blog was accessible to all Canadian Internet users, the entire content should have been in both official languages.

Lessons learned

The fact that Canada Post and Service Canada changed the designation of unilingual offices so that they could provide services in both official languages, particularly in Whistler and Richmond, shows that it is possible to go beyond the *Official Languages (Communications with and Services to the Public) Regulations*.¹²

Three of the four institutions—Service Canada, Parks Canada and the CMHC—indicated that they consulted and even recruited from French-speaking communities in their preparations for the Games or Games-related events.

Two out of the four institutions evaluated their performance during the Games: Canada Post said that its monitoring mechanisms showed that many clients had requested service in French in its bilingual post offices, and the CMHC was able to show that it had precisely evaluated its service delivery during the Games. While recognizing that performance indicators can vary according to the context

and the services provided, and that demand is not always a reliable indicator, the Commissioner would like to commend the institutions that systematically evaluated their service delivery in both languages and encourage others to do the same at future events.

Future outlook

As previously mentioned, all federal institutions that participate in a major national or international event should adopt the standard practice of integrating official languages into their strategic planning in advance. For an institution such as Canada Post, for example, seeing the event as a business opportunity to which value could be added is a way of thinking that counteracts the idea that bilingual service should only be offered when required. An attitude that makes client satisfaction a priority should be adopted by institutions participating in events like this. In the eyes of visitors from Canada and abroad, federal institutions that interact with the public symbolize the Government of Canada. All efforts should be made to give visitors an impression of Canada that evokes Canadian linguistic duality.

Increasing the number of designated bilingual service points and the bilingual capacity of all offices and institutions offering service to the travelling public, are measures that should be considered by any institution offering front-line service during future large-scale events.

It is essential for federal institutions participating in major events to be able to evaluate the resources that they need to ensure delivery of their services and are also able to adapt in response to this, whether on an ad hoc basis or in the planning for future events. Adequate monitoring must be established, with clear performance objectives to be achieved, to ensure that the services promised are delivered in the official language of the public's choice.

Institutions coordinating health and security

Context

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) played an important role in the Games. It handled the coordination of health emergency measures and was also responsible for quarantining and medical services in case of an outbreak of an infectious disease.

¹² As previously indicated, Parks Canada must offer bilingual services at all national parks and sites.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) was responsible for the Vancouver 2010 Integrated Security Unit. This major undertaking required coordinating the activities of several organizations responsible for law enforcement and coordinating private security services. As the contractors were working on behalf of the RCMP, they had to comply with the *Official Languages Act*.

Observations

Public Health Agency of Canada

The PHAC initially had limited measures for official languages in its planning for the Games.

The PHAC's response revealed that its Office of Quarantine Services increased its bilingual capacity by 33% at Vancouver International Airport. According to the PHAC, officers were thus able to meet active offer requirements when responding to telephone inquiries. The PHAC also designated bilingual liaison officers in order to follow up on media inquiries in English or French.

The PHAC indicated that it had worked with VANOC to increase that organization's bilingual capacity. Thus, almost 30% of the trained doctors on VANOC's Health Emergency Response Team could offer service in both languages.

A translation service was established within PHAC's Emergency Operations Centre so that information could be provided accurately and simultaneously in both official languages.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) told us that the issue of being able to provide bilingual service during the Games was part of the resource planning and communication strategies right from the creation of the Vancouver 2010 Integrated Security Unit in 2003.

The RCMP said that around 18% of the 4,370 RCMP employees assigned to the Games were bilingual. The RCMP also enlisted the help of 1,684 officers from other police forces from across Canada, including 361 from Quebec. The RCMP did not appear to have gathered data on the bilingual capacity of these officers. The police officers from Quebec wore their own uniforms, which allowed the public to identify them as resources able to offer service in French.

The RCMP's response indicates that the Integrated Security Unit concentrated its bilingual personnel in places that were likely to receive a greater demand for services in French. For example, 65% of media relations officers were bilingual. The RCMP stated that the police officers and supervisors assigned to the spectator entry points for the sites were bilingual.

In terms of monitoring, the quality assurance program included periodic follow-ups at the locations where there were X-ray machines. According to the RCMP, the rate of compliance was initially 55%, but it improved over time. The RCMP did not, however, provide further data. The RCMP also said that the security staff received information and tools for service delivery in both languages.

A private firm was hired by the RCMP to provide security monitoring services during the Games. A clause in the initial contract stated that 3% of this contractor's employees had to be able to communicate with the public in French and English. This percentage was increased to 11% following a complaint submitted to the Office of the Commissioner regarding the lack of bilingual recruitment material. In its response, the RCMP acknowledged that more bilingual resources should have been required from the start. The Commissioner feels compelled to mention that the recruitment campaign conducted in Ottawa in the fall of 2009 was exclusively in English and that there should have been measures in place to ensure that this recruitment occurred in both languages.

The employees of the Office of the Commissioner had mixed results regarding security services that they received at several sites. At Canada Hockey Place, one of the RCMP officers supervising a security screening checkpoint was able to provide service in French. At other Olympic sites, such as the Pacific Coliseum, none of the RCMP officers supervising the security checkpoints were able to provide service in French.

When the Office of the Commissioner's employees were at the Olympic cauldron, none of the officers (whether RCMP, Ottawa Police or Ontario Provincial Police) assigned to positions where there was direct interaction with members of the public were able to provide service in French. The two officers from the Sûreté du Québec who were present were not assigned to positions where they interacted with the public.

Lessons learned

It is clear that, when developing third-party agreements for security or health services, proper planning of bilingual capacity needs would have led to a higher level

of bilingualism. Had the planning taken into account the requirements for service in both languages at an event of this size, compliance results could have been higher than those communicated to us by the RCMP.

Future outlook

Executives of federal institutions that are responsible for health and security services should ensure that third parties acting on their behalf take the necessary measures to have sufficient bilingual capacity to be able to provide services in both official languages. They should also demonstrate leadership in the agreements established with their provincial and municipal counterparts so that essential health and security services for visitors are also bilingual.

CONCLUSION – THE LINGUISTIC LEGACY OF THE VANCOUVER GAMES

The Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games gave Canada an unparalleled opportunity to show the world what makes us unique. Linguistic duality is at the heart of our identity. Large-scale national and international events held in Canada, such as the Vancouver Games, are great opportunities to enhance the vitality of Canada's English- and French-speaking communities. The Games were a great source of pride and unity for Canadians, largely because of their excellent organization and the success of Canada's athletes, a growing number of whom speak both English and French.

Apart from the serious oversight related to use of French in the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games, the Vancouver Games successfully reflected the fact that English and French are the two official languages of Canada and are at the core of our national identity. The Annex on official languages requirements in the Multiparty Agreement and the language clauses in the contribution agreements were unprecedented in Olympic and Paralympic history.

VANOC was also innovative in creating the Official Languages Function. This unit's impact would have been greater if it had been created sooner and if its director had had more authority. In the final year, VANOC also created the Advisory Committee on Official Languages, made up of

well-qualified people with a higher level of authority. Again, VANOC could have benefited from the expertise of this committee at key times during the planning stage, if it had been created earlier.

The Translation Bureau demonstrated its proficiency and professionalism yet again by meeting the challenge of translating a large volume of words in just three months. The government had to allocate additional funds for this work to be done. This last-minute response would not have been needed if better planning had been in place for translation requirements along the way.

British Columbia's Francophone community invested a lot of energy into showcasing its language and culture during the Games. This also raised awareness and acceptance of British Columbia's French culture and population. The Place de la Francophonie was a great success, even meriting mention in *The Vancouver Sun*. The bilingual signage at the venues, the bilingual Welcome to Vancouver and Whistler signs and the bilingual signage on Granville Island all remained following the Games. However, despite all the successes, some felt that the Olympic and Paralympic Games had not left a permanent tangible legacy.

For future large-scale events in Canada, all parties involved need to understand the importance of having clear and complete official languages requirements in their agreements, of ensuring that officials and executives fully grasp the meaning of linguistic duality, and of addressing official languages, including translation requirements, in the initial planning stages of the event. From the outset, the federal organization coordinating the participation of the Government of Canada needs to have stricter control, and an external advisory committee must be created to provide advice and monitor important issues. These proposals are intended to improve the process in order to ensure that official languages are well integrated into every level of large-scale event planning.

Federal institutions delivering services for future large-scale events should build on the experience gained by VANOC, Canadian Heritage and other institutions involved in organizing the 2010 Games so that they can avoid making the same mistakes in providing services in both official languages. Eleven federal institutions responded to the Commissioner's 2009 recommendation to report on their

performance during the Games. Analysis of these responses revealed insights that could be applied to future events. Best practices included increasing bilingual personnel, designating additional bilingual points of service, promoting the image of a bilingual Canada in all contact with the public and demonstrating leadership in developing agreements with other levels of government and third parties providing services on behalf of federal institutions.

The Canadian government has an important role to play in organizing and hosting this kind of large-scale national or international event. The Vancouver Games showed that the government is noticeably involved in helping to shape the overall direction of the Games. The Government of Canada can and must take a leadership role in order to ensure that these types of events fully reflect the country's linguistic duality. The 2015 Pan American and Parapan American Games in Toronto, Ontario, and the 150th anniversary of Canadian confederation in 2017 are perfect opportunities to benefit from the linguistic legacy of the Vancouver Games.

In previous Olympic Games, French had experienced some major setbacks. However, the positive results of the 2010 Games showed that Canada has set the bar very high for future Olympic organizing committees. To help ensure the proper respect for English and French as the languages of the Olympic Movement, Canada could offer its expertise to the International Olympic Committee, as well as to organizing committees of future Olympic and Paralympic Games.

In addition to this report, the Commissioner of Official Languages would like to leave a legacy in the form of a guide that his office will publish in early 2011 (available online at www.officiallanguages.gc.ca). Building on the experience gained from the Vancouver Games, this document will help guide future organizing committees planning large-scale national and international events, as well as federal institutions that will be called upon to participate, on how to organize an event that reflects Canadian linguistic duality and that makes English- and French-speaking Canadians feel welcome and fully represented. This guide is not meant to replace the expertise of federal institutions or of the organizing committee. It is designed to be used more as a tool to remind federal institutions and future organizing committees to take languages obligations into account right from the beginning and to include official languages in all levels of planning for the event.